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AUTHOR Farber, Barry A.
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ABSTRACT

Issues regarding the nature and impact of the current reform movement in education have somewhat obscured attention to the problem of teacher stress and burnout. The related problems of stress and burnout have not dissipated. Although there is a good selection of descriptive literature, models of treatment are underrepresented. Burnout is distinguished from depression and other possible diagnoses, and three types of burnout are discussed: (1) worn-out teachers; (2) frenetic ("burned-out") teachers; (3) underchallenged teachers. Case study material is presented and possible interventions are discussed in relation to each type of burnout. In conclusion, it is noted that the most effective way of treating burnout is through efforts to change the nature or functioning of the school-that is, to prevent these disorders from occurring by making schools more user-friendly places for teachers as well as children. (EMK)

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Tailoring Treatment Strategies for Different Types of Burnout

Barry A. Farber: Teachers College, Columbia University

(Paper presented at APA, San Francisco, August, 1998)

Issues regarding the nature and impact of the current reform movement have dominated the literature on schooling in recent years. In part, this focus has obscured attention to the problem of teacher stress and burnout which seemed so salient in the 1970s and 1980s. In part, too, it has been assumed that reform efforts would eliminate, or at least greatly reduce, stress-related problems of teachers. Unfortunately, it appears that the reform movement has had little--or even at times a negative--impact on the prevalence of teacher stress or burnout. As has been true of previous waves of school reform, many teachers have felt left out of the decision-making process and, moreover, have felt increased pressure to achieve "better" educational results with a greater diversity of students and fewer resources. Teachers commonly complain that they're only viewed as successful if 100% of their students achieve at or above the mean on every standardized test. As Gene Maeroff (1988) observed, "The situation that currently exists for many teachers, especially in problem-plagued urban schools districts, produces not empowerment, but impotence" (p. 474).

The related problems, then, of teacher stress and burnout have not dissipated, even if research on these phenomena seems to have declined over the last decade. The early literature on burnout tended to be descriptive, facilitating an understanding of the factors that

constitute the disorder (usually understood in terms of Maslach's three factors of Emotional Exhaustion, Lack of Personal Accomplishment, and Depersonalization) and the professional and personal symptoms that typically occur. Current definitions of burnout, primarily built on this early work, typically include phrases like "a prolonged response to chronic emotional and interpersonal stressors caused by dealing with others in need"; " "a combination of physical fatigue, emotional exhaustion and cognitive weariness" (Shirom, 1989); and "a work-related syndrome that stems from an individual's perception of a significant discrepancy between effort (input) and reward (output)". My own sense is that burnout is essentially about "inconsequentiality"--a perception on the part of human service professionals that their efforts to help others have been ineffective, that the task is endless, and the personal payoffs for their work (in terms of accomplishment, recognition, advancement or appreciation) have not been forthcoming (Farber, 1991).

Over the last decade, the literature on teacher burnout has focused to a great extent on etiology, suggesting roots at the individual, school, and societal levels. We now have a greater understanding of the type of individual who is prone to burnout (in the United States--males under 40s teaching in middle or senior high schools; those who are idealistic or passionate about their work; those with an external locus of control) and a greater sense of the stressors teachers experience (e.g., excessive paperwork, large classes; apathetic and/or disruptive students). We have also begun to understand the type of school that tends to catalyze the

development of stress-related phenomena in teachers (e.g., large, urban schools with overcrowded classrooms; schools that are highly bureaucratic with no management teams, schools that are physically run down or dirty and lacking staff and equipment, schools that lack social support among teachers and lack administrative support of teachers' efforts). Further, we have a far better understanding of the social context for the phenomena of teacher burnout--how certain traditions and values in the greater society, including the chronic undervaluation of work involving the care of children and, similarly, the continual denigration of work primarily performed by women, serve to promote the conditions that make teachers feel overworked and unappreciated.

But what was, and continues to be underrepresented in the literature are models of treatment; much as we have ignored the needs of overwhelmed parents and overwhelmed and underpaid child care workers, we have ignored the despair of many of our nation's teachers--to the detriment, of course, of not only these groups of adults but of the children whom they nurture and teach. Moreover, the work that does exist in this area tends to treat teacher burnout as a homogenous phenomenon with a predictable and consistent set of symptoms. Certainly in comparison to the emerging literature in psychotherapy--with its strong emphasis on identifying empirically supported treatments for specific diagnoses--the equivalent work on burnout lags far behind. (Arguably, if "burnout" was a recognized DSM-IV diagnosis and its treatment was supported, however minimally, by managed care companies, far more extensive research would have already been generated regarding guidelines for effective

therapy). As it stands, burnout is treated essentially as a non-distinct stress-related phenomenon. Thus, suggestions for its remediation tend to parallel those for any stress-related disorder: relaxation, meditation, and exercise; time management, seeking out alternative sources of satisfaction, strengthening coping skills, and enhancing social support. Although, for the most part, these solutions have not been empirically tested, they make intuitive sense--with one important exception: These suggestions do not address the strong phenomenological perception of inconsequentiality that is an essential aspect of most courses of burnout.

A related problem is that burnout is often considered in unitary and global terms--as if only one type of this disorder is possible. Contrast, for example, our understanding of the phenomenon of burnout with the phenomena of depression. Depression, we now understand, comes in many varieties: neurotic vs. psychotic depression, agitated vs. retarded depression, bipolar depression, atypical depression, dysthymia, etc. Although often viewed as such, burnout is not a singular sensation. As Friedman (1996) has noted, "a unidimensional, single-track...depiction of the burnout process reflects a simplistic approach and ignores individual differences [that]...may influence the choice of 'paths' in the burnout process" (p. 247-248).

Only in recent years have a few researchers attempted to delineate subtypes of burnout--to move from a generic model to models describing distinct forms and patterns. Friedman (1996), for example, using path analysis, has demonstrated the existence of two

separate pathways to burnout: a cognitive pathway, manifested primarily in personal and professional feelings of nonaccomplishment; and an emotional pathway, primarily reflected in a sense of overload and emotional exhaustion. For purposes of this presentation, however, I will focus on Farber's (1991) classification scheme.

Farber (1991) proposed three types of burnout: "wearout" (or "brown-out") wherein an individual essentially gives up, or performs work in a perfunctory manner, when confronted with too much stress and too little gratification; "classic" (or "frenetic") burnout wherein an individual works increasingly hard, to the point of exhaustion, in pursuit of sufficient gratification to match the extent of stress experienced; and an "underchallenged' type of burnout wherein an individual is faced not with an excessive degree of stress per se (i.e., work overload) but rather with monotonous and unstimulating work conditions that fail to provide sufficient rewards. How might these subtypes manifest specifically among teachers?

Type I: Worn-out Teachers

Freudenberger's original conception of burnout was that workers would find themselves under increasing pressure to succeed in helping others, would demand more of themselves than they were able to give, and would ultimately exhaust themselves. These were individuals who were overly committed and excessively dedicated, and who ignored their own discomforts and needs almost without respite. For such individuals failure is simply inconceivable--the only solution to temporary setbacks and frustration is more work and greater effort.

But this is not the typical description of teachers who complain of burnout. Indeed, were this the case, although we might feel badly for a group of driven and unfulfilled teachers, we might well be delighted by the educational benefits generated by such a stance. More often than not, though, teachers are "worn-out" rather than burned out. Instead of burning out from overwork, they turn off to the job and stop attempting to succeed in situations that appear hopeless. Burned out teachers are zealous in trying to get their students to learn and like what they are doing; worn-out teachers are those who regularly pass out old, duplicated worksheets. Worn-out teachers react to stress not by working harder but rather by working less hard; they attempt to balance the discrepancy between input and output by reducing their input. In this sense, worn-out workers have quit before they can become burned out.

Once teachers are worn-out, renewing their sense of dedication and care are difficult tasks. Worn-out teachers act as if they believe that regardless of how hard they work the classroom results will be disappointing. These teachers act in accordance with the learned helplessness paradigm--they no longer believe their actions can effect the intended goal. They have been worn down by the cumulative effects of dealing with situations that they perceive as beyond their control: disruptive students who seem not to listen to anyone, parents who seem to have given up on parenting or who seem simply overwhelmed by life, bureaucrats who seem more interested in their own power than they are in student progress or teachers' standard of living. The inner city teacher may be worn-out from dealing with the classroom consequences of poverty and

despair; the suburban teacher may feel worn-out from dealing with the entitlement and callousness that sometimes accompanies affluence.

A teacher best labeled as worn-out had the following to say about his job (as a high school teacher in a small, racially integrated city in New Jersey):

"How many years can you expect me to work hard, to believe in what I am doing, to imagine that I am making a difference, when no one else--not psychologists, not the criminal justice system, not social agencies, not the federal government, not anyone--is dealing effectively with the problems I face?... Drugs, crime, apathy, teenage pregnancy . . . none of these problems are going to get fixed without massive amounts of help and we both know how likely that is. I'll be damned if I'm going to ruin my life trying to play the hero. I once thought I could, but I know now I can't. Or maybe I just won't... Even when I've tried my best, the successes have been less than overwhelming and God knows never appreciated. I'm bombarded daily with demands and threats; sometimes I even get ridiculed which I can't stand. I'm too old [41] to take this anymore. The only way I can protect myself is to stop caring. I know I get back less by giving less but I just can't give anymore. "

Type II: Frenetic ("Burned-out") Teachers

In the face of adversity and anticipated failure, some teachers do indeed redouble their efforts and do everything possible to make classroom success more likely. Individuals who fall in this category believe in maximum effort till success, with no let-up allowable; failure is never attributed to the nature of the problem but is always seen as a failure of will.

The quality that marks the efforts of truly burned out teachers is that of frantic energy marshaled on behalf of their students. This energy often cannot be sustained for long periods and the person

ultimately succumbs to exhaustion but there is often a nobleness to these efforts that is inspiring. Though others may chide them for their failure to perceive things "realistically" or for their refusal to shift perspectives on a problem, they (teachers destined to burnout) refuse to compromise the integrity of their values. When input fails to achieve the hoped for output, burned out teachers don't narrow their goals, rationalize their failures, or reduce their effort (as worn out teachers are apt to do) but rather work harder and harder in the belief that a point will be reached where their efforts will succeed. But the despair that accompanies the eventual realization that "this isn't going to work"--that despite my best efforts, everyone's not going to be reading at grade level by June--may be considerable. Whereas wornout teachers have gradually allowed cracks to form in their belief world and have become increasingly disillusioned, burned out teachers often appear to hold on tightly to a seemingly impervious belief system until the whole system shatters suddenly.

The distinction between worn-out and burned out teachers essentially lies in their reaction to frustration and disappointment. The wornout teacher is willing to concede at least partial defeat and withdraws his or her personal investment in work; the burned out teacher cannot admit defeat (or be content with reasonable successes) and reacts by working harder and investing increasingly more of him or herself until no more is possible and exhaustion sets in.

The classic example of a burned out (rather than worn-out) teacher is that of a young, well-educated, socially idealistic,

politically involved young man or woman who comes to an impoverished inner city or rural school brimming with ideas, enthusiasm, and confidence and who, after several months (or perhaps even years) of giving more and more--of depriving him or herself of sleep and/or a relaxing social life, of trying to find new, creative ways to motivate and teach children--senses that these efforts aren't paying off, that he or she is ineffective and perhaps even still mistrusted by the students. But burnout can occur in more propitious circumstances as well.

A Burned out Suburban Teacher:

Jim S. was a High School English teacher in an affluent suburban community. He had dreamed of being an English teacher since his own high school days, imagining that he would be able to motivate his students far more easily and effectively than his own teachers had been able to do. . . During his first year at the school, he was assigned four classes, two of which were academically talented. For the most part, the students loved him. He was young, seemed to understand students well, joked around with them, respected them, challenged them fairly. During that year he was asked to be on the prom committee and enthusiastically agreed; the second year he agreed to serve as the advisor to the school newspaper and agreed also to help with production of the school play. At this point, these assignments didn't seem burdensome; indeed, he felt more a part of the school and closer to the students. He loved the feeling of helping students and enjoyed greatly the adulation he was receiving. The third year was a turning point, though--as his reputation grew, students would seek him out after school for advice. At first, this too was tremendously gratifying but soon the pressure grew to be at school more frequently to help out a still greater number of students with even more serious problems. But they needed him, and the guidance counselor and school psychologist, overburdened themselves, encouraged his efforts. The school was beginning to consume him and though he told himself he loved the work he also felt that there was no respite--there was always something to plan, someone to meet with, some project that needed his help. Though

his demeanor was almost always pleasant, he began to resent the constant intrusions on his life.

The turning point was one afternoon in his third year of teaching. Leaving school at 5:00 P.M. a student turned up at his room to ask for a few minutes of his time. He became angry--and though he quickly reversed himself and spent time with the student, he felt changed. Over the next few weeks he frequently felt angry at students for not respecting his boundaries, at other teachers for not being sufficiently available to students (thus leaving more work for him), at the chairperson for being rigid and for not helping him to protect his time better. He felt overworked and underappreciated and began wondering for the first time whether this was really going to be his life's work.

Type III: Underchallenged Teachers

There is yet another group of disenchanted teachers who appear to be neither excessively driven (frenetic, burned out) nor excessively fatigued (wornout). These are the teachers who feel dissatisfied not by the sheer amount of work that needs to be done or even by the obstacles that must be encountered in doing the work but rather by the sameness and lack of stimulation presented by the tasks that face them each day and each year. These are the teachers who feel they can no longer summon any enthusiasm for teaching simple multiplication to elementary school students or the causes of the Civil War to yet another generation of high school students. They are uninterested rather than fed up, bored rather than intolerably stressed. For underchallenged teachers the stresses of work are not especially great but neither are the rewards, particularly those of a psychological nature.

The plight of underchallenged teachers is not as dramatic as those who fall into the other two categories of burnout but they too

feel that they are getting insufficient returns from teaching given the work they put in. They do not feel oppressed by the work as do many worn out teachers, and they do not have the missionary zeal and frantic energy of the classically burned out teacher--but over time the underchallenged teacher begins to perform the work more perfunctorily, begins to question more whether this is the right field, begins to withdraw energy and enthusiasm. Typically, all this occurs not out of desperation (as with the worn out teacher) and not as a reaction to a feeling of sudden and total depletion (as with the burned out teacher), but it nonetheless occurs. The underchallenged teacher continues to do a professional job, doesn't especially resent the work, but doesn't especially look forward to it either. Teaching has lost its meaning, its spark. Once viewed as a means to personal fulfillment, it now feels like another assembly line job. Other work possibilities begin to be considered. Underchallenged teachers represent a most unfortunate failure of the educational system inasmuch as many who fall within this particular category of burnout seem to be among the brightest and most creative of our nation's teachers.

Over her parents' protestations, Joan decided to become an elementary school teacher during her junior year in college. Her parents, noting her consistently excellent grades, leadership ability (she held numerous offices in student government), and interest in civic issues, had wanted her to go to Law School. But citing her love for children, as well as her desire to have summers for herself, she decided on education as a career. For the most part, she enjoyed her education courses and was intrigued by many of the issues discussed in her classes. She looked forward to trying out her own curriculum and classroom management ideas in her own classes and was meanwhile learning a good deal from her teachers and supervisors.

Her first job was in the district in which she student taught. Impressed by her ability and personable style, the school superintendent of this medium-sized college community offered her a position teaching 2nd grade. For several years Joan was mostly content with her job--her students were well-mannered children from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds and with each passing year she felt increasingly able to meet their needs. She felt good about her ability as a teacher, a feeling confirmed by feedback from parents as well as school administration. But after her fourth year on the job, vague feelings of discontent began to set in. She wasn't angry at anyone, genuinely enjoyed the children, and felt that the administration was somewhat narrow-minded but essentially decent and quite fair in their treatment of her. She had none of the more debilitating symptoms commonly associated with teacher burnout--at most she felt unexcited about going to work and mildly depressed on coming home--but she used the word "burnout" to describe her state. Actually, the closest she could come to articulating with any degree of specificity what was wrong was a phrase she'd found herself frequently using with friends: "I feel like I've outgrown my job." Later she'd say too "I know it sounds conceited, but I feel smarter than my job...I'm doing the same things over and over again...I just don't feel like doing it anymore...I'll miss the kids but I want new challenges...I want to work with adults...Intellectually, I know I'm doing something quite important but I feel like I'm stagnating."

She considered asking to be transferred to a later grade but anticipated that the same process would occur after a few years of teaching 5th or 6th grade. She considered going into school administration but felt daunted at the prospect of spending years in graduate school with no guarantee of finding a good job in the field; moreover, she felt put off by the politicized nature of school administration. She felt somewhat guilty leaving teaching (to go into public relations) but justified it by reminding herself that she'd given four good years to teaching and that she'd certainly done "her share" of public service.

Perhaps to call this teacher "burned out" is to extend the term too far. Her symptoms certainly do not correspond to the usual list proffered by researchers or expected by the public. Yet often these

teachers attribute their resignation or their waning interest to "burnout" and in at least one critical sense they are right--they too perceive that they are receiving less from their work than they are putting in and refuse to continue with more of the same. On this basis they constitute a significant, if relatively inconspicuous part of what may be broadly conceived as the teacher burnout problem.

Some teachers vacillate among these descriptive categories, but many are also accurately described by these general subtypes. (Research is currently being conducted to determine the extent to which a wide variety of teachers identify with each of these three patterns and the extent to which these patterns correspond to scores on the MBI: See Overhead). The greater point, though, is that these different types of burnout likely require different forms of treatment reflecting the specific needs of teachers with different types of burnout; for example, the wornout teacher needs to reinvest his or her energies in the work whereas the burned out teacher is more likely to benefit from a diffusion of his or her work-focused energies.

Before specifying further the types of treatment that seem conceptually to fit the needs of different types of burned out teachers, I want to clarify the nature of the treatments being considered. As several theorists have noted, most notably Seymour Sarason (1977), with phenomena of these types where professionals feel disaffected by their work, the ideal approach involves the establishment of a psychological sense of community--a setting in which the needs of the caregiver (such as the teacher) are as carefully nurtured as those of the recipients of these services (i.e.,

students). As Sarason has consistently pointed out, unless the professional feels a sense of satisfaction in his or her work, it is unlikely that he or she can be effective in providing services. But these and other preventive approaches--in which the setting or management or structure or values of the school--are themselves the object of re-design--will not be focused upon in this presentation. Instead, my focus will solely be on individually-oriented treatments--on interventions that individual teachers can avail themselves of regardless of the cooperation of other school personnel.

Working with Wornout Teachers

What interventions, then, might meet the needs of those teachers who are seemingly "worn-out"? The worn-out teacher no longer believes that his or her efforts will effect any desired consequences; therefore, he or she has stopped investing in the work. What seems called for, then, are cognitive approaches that re-focus and re-define success. The work with such teachers involves cognitive reappraisals of success; these teachers must shift from global and binary appraisals of outcome ("no one in my classes is learning"; "None of the students care at all") to specific, more narrowly focused, and more modulated appraisals ("some of my students are making reasonable progress" "some days are better than others"; "some classes I taught went reasonably well"). The focus must be on partial successes. These teachers cannot allow themselves to feel like failures if every student does not attend or understand or do well; rather, they need to learn to hold in mind, as they prepare for the next day and during the teaching day itself,

mental representations of those students who do care, who have learned, who are responsive. Thus, this type of treatment of worn-out teachers--at least for those who still care about regaining their investment in the work--bears a resemblance to Beck's Cognitive Therapy of depression. Worn-out teachers, like depressed clients, tend to minimize successes, maximize failures, and perceive the future as inevitably as bleak as the present. Thus, homework assignments--for example, keeping a journal of successes or of pleasant experiences with colleagues or students--can be a necessary reminder of the more positive aspects of teaching.

In addition, worn-out teachers may well profit from keeping in mind their ideological reasons for deciding to teach. Cary Cherniss (1983) has written eloquently of how ideological communities can restore one's faith, one's believe, in one's work. Sometimes, then, encouraging worn-out teachers to socialize more with those teachers in their school who seem to still be invested in their work and gratified from it, may rejuvenate worn-out teachers' sense of purpose.

On the other hand, social support--arguably the most frequently prescribed antidote to professional stress and burnout--often produces unintended consequences. Worn-out teachers tend to find those colleagues and friends who confirm their sense that teaching is only and always a stressful, ungratifying profession, that students are only ungrateful and disruptive, and that administrators are always unresponsive and self-promoting. If the partial truth of these perceptions becomes ratified by others, and if other truths are not introduced in the discussion, the wornout

teacher may well become even more discouraged and the task of undoing the despair and helplessness becomes ever greater. Thus, as Ayala Pines (1983) work suggests, social support in the form of technical advice (e.g., helping teachers find more successful, innovative ways of working with their students) may be a particularly effective intervention for wornout teachers.

Furthermore, the other typically prescribed activities for teachers--the range of activities subsumed under the idea of stress-reduction (time management, exercise, etc.)--are likely to yield only short-term gains for teachers who are wornout. While it is hard to argue against the idea of stress-reduction, in the absence of significant modifications in a teacher's appraisal that he or she is at least partially successful at the job, stress-reduction techniques by themselves are very unlikely to renew one's commitment and involvement in the work. Bottom line for this group of burned out teachers: find a way for them to believe again that their work is meaningful and at least partially successful. For some, it may mean holding on the image that they are the most consistent, reliable, caring adults in some of their students' lives.

Working with Burned Out Teachers

Classic burned out teachers have not had their self-esteem eroded (as is the case of wornout teachers)--they cling tenaciously to a high sense of self-esteem, sometimes risking their health and ignoring their personal lives in the pursuit of educational success. Thus, some of the cognitive interventions noted above may not be appropriate with this group. They (classic burned out teachers) have experienced partial successes, but "want it all." Thus, the cognitive

reappraisals necessary for this group must tend in the direction of avoiding or altering such self-statements as "I must be perfect" or "I am failure unless all my students are successful." I have also found that psychoanalytic work with this group tends to be more successful than with the wornout group of teachers; a focus on finding a balance in one's life (for example, between, personal and professional needs; or between one's own needs and the needs of others), and, similarly, on exploring the roots of one's need to be perfect, can sometimes restore a sense of equilibrium in the lives of burned out teachers. Sometimes, too, forcing the burned out teacher's attention to the pain and sadness of others in his or her life who are being neglected in the service of an all-encompassing work ethic, can modify this individual's singular focus.

This group may also benefit from typical stress-reduction techniques. Burned out teachers are often overwrought, have difficulty relaxing, and are preoccupied by the demands of work. Meditation, exercise, and other forms of relaxation training can attenuate pressures.

What are the dangers of social support for the frenetic, burned out teacher? In the presence of well-meaning friends and family who are trying to convince this individual to "slow down," to make more time for him or herself and the family, to realize that he or she can't solve all the problems of the world overnight or by him or herself--there is a tendency for the burned out individual to reaffirm his or her grandiosity, to be convinced that even these decent people "don't get it" or are insufficiently caring and that only through the efforts of people like me will real work get done. In

short, burned out individuals are often narcissistic and their grandiosity may be very difficult to tame. The overriding task, then for this group of teachers is to convince them that their presence is needed in many places: that, in order for them to be as effective in their lives as they want to be, they need to be available to others, need to be present in a less stressed way, and need to be good to themselves as well.

Working with the Underchallenged Teacher

In contrast to the previous type of burned out teacher, the underchallenged teacher typically is not in need of stress-reduction. The problem here is not of reducing stress per se but of increasing the sense that one's abilities and talents are being well channeled. Ideally, the underchallenged teacher is working in a school with administrators who are flexible, sensitive, and responsive enough to provide this teacher with new or different opportunities--perhaps teaching a different grade, perhaps becoming involved in management teams or parent-teacher groups, or perhaps applying for a grant for a pet project. But with or without the support of school administrators, the task here, as it is with the wornout teacher, is to convince the underchallenged teacher to re-invest in his or her career.

Sometimes this might mean something as simple as encouraging the underchallenged teacher to experiment with new curriculum in the classroom; to try old, well-established methods a new way, even at the risk of being somewhat less successful at first. Unfortunately, interventions with teachers of this type are rarely so easy. More typically, the work here is to expand the

perceived domain of this teacher's work or career. This underchallenged group needs to see their identity as teacher as encompassing activities and work beyond the actual time spent in the classroom. This 9-3 time will always be a central focus of a teacher's work-related identity, but it does not have to be the exclusive focus of this identity. Many teachers get involved in union activities, in writing textbooks or software programs, in working with new teachers, in coaching sports or running after-school clubs. Moreover, the teacher who feels that the work has become too routine--that he or she can do the job without a great deal of effort--may be quite good, good enough perhaps to teach others at a college level.

The self-esteem of the underchallenged teacher may vary extensively from case to case: for some, there is a fraying of self-esteem, a sense that they can or should be doing something more challenging with their abilities and a questioning of why this isn't the case; for others, their self-esteem becomes somewhat bolstered by the ease with which they perform their work. Often the difference lies in the nature of the reference group employed: those whose self-esteem is threatened by their frustration and boredom have often compared their plight to those who are in more highly esteemed professions, for example, lawyers or physicians; those who self-esteem remains intact (or is defensively high) remember well that they are still doing reasonably good work in a difficult profession and may, in fact, be having an easier time of it than their colleagues. In the first case (of frayed self-esteem in the underchallenged teacher), the therapist's work may consist of two

tasks: first, to restore a sense of balance to this teacher's sense of self by reminding him or her of past and present successess and of the great need for this work in our society; and second, to confront and challenge this teacher to re-invest in the work in order to garner the greater rewards that further commitment is likely to yield. Among those teachers whose self-esteem is high, the therapist's ask may be, in fact, to challenge these individuals to perform work, both in and out of the classrom, commensurate with the skills and abilities these teachers feel they have.

There are, of course, multiple theoretical approaches with which to treat each of these variants of burnout; moreover, as noted earlier, often the most effective way of treating burnout is through efforts to change the nature or functioning of the school--that is, to prevent these disorders from occurring (or at least reducing the frequency of incidence) by making schools more user-friendly places for teachers as well as children. Children, we are often reminded, are our future; schools, we are often reminded, are not doing the job we need them to do. But what is often lost in the rhetoric of school reform is the great need to treat teachers in ways that make their personal and professional satisfaction a paramount part of the entire educational process. When teachers do burnout, however, we must remember that the manifestations of this disorder may be varied and that treatment must, therefore, reflect both the extent of the stresses encountered and the extent of the accomplishments experienced.

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